



[2013]

## FAIR LABOR ASSOCIATION INDEPENDENT EXTERNAL MONITORING AGRICULTURAL REPORT

**COMPANY:** Syngenta

**COUNTRY:** India

**PROVINCE:** Panchmahal, Gujarat

**MONITOR:** FLA

**AUDIT DATE:** 3-7 February 2014

**PRODUCTS:** Hybrid Sunflower

**NUMBER OF GROWERS/WORKERS:** 13/15

**NUMBER OF GROWES/WORKERS INTERVIEWED:** 13/15

**NUMBER OF FARMS VISITED:** 5

**TOTAL AREA COVERED IN AUDIT:** 20.5 Acre

**PROCESSES:** Cross-pollination

To view more about the FLA's work with Syngenta, please visit the FLA website [here](#).

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### Code Awareness:

GEN 2 Ensure that all Company growers as well as Seed Organizers inform their workers about the workplace standards orally and through the posting of standards in a prominent place (in the local languages spoken by workers) and undertake other efforts to educate workers about the standards on a regular basis.

### Noncompliance

**Explanation:** Most of the growers and all the workers are not aware of the workplace standards and the company COC. The awareness and training programs organized by the company have been largely confined to a few grower leaders. The company has not yet succeeded in educating the workers on workplace standards.

Source: Grower / Worker / Management interviews, farm visits, records review

**Plan Of Action:** Syngenta has trained its implementation team working in sunflower seed farms on code of conduct requirements. The below action points will be the Standard Operation procedure for Syngenta sunflower production and will be followed stringently every year. We have already included this in the teams' KPIs.

- Syngenta will organize awareness campaigns for the growers and workers about all code elements in each village before and during the season;
- Syngenta will maintain the documentation of such campaigns at the IMS center.

**Deadline Date:** November 2014 to March 2015

**Action Taken:**

**Plan Complete:**

**Plan Complete Date:**

## Code Awareness

Other (Company Internal Grievance Policy and Procedures)

### Noncompliance

**Explanation:** The growers and workers do not have any awareness of the Company's grievance policy and procedure.

Source: Worker/Grower interviews, record review

**Plan Of Action:** Syngenta has trained its implementation team working on this issue. The below action points will be the Standard Operating procedure for Syngenta Sunflower Production and will be followed stringently every year. Every year, growers and workers will be educated on the grievance policy and procedure. The company had already started raising awareness of the grievance system among the growers and workers. Telephone numbers for addressing grievances have been included on the wall paintings, which have been painted in this area (15 wall paintings covering 35 villages so far).

- Syngenta will educate the growers about the hotline numbers that they can use for raising grievances during the pre-season meetings;
- Syngenta will educate the workers at farm level through trainings about grievance procedure and overall COC;
- Syngenta will educate the workers about the grievance procedure through wall paintings and pamphlets;
- Syngenta will explore the possibility of collecting growers' and workers' mobile phone numbers and create awareness through SMS alerts.

**Deadline Date:** November 2014 to March 2015

**Action Taken:**

**Plan Complete:**

**Plan Complete Date:**

## Child Labor: Proof of Age Documentation

CL.3 Company will assist the grower in maintaining proof of age documentation for all young workers in the farm and is recommended to maintain proof of age documentation for all workers in the farm, including long term and casual workers.

### Noncompliance

**Explanation:** Neither the growers nor the seed organizers maintain any proof of age verification document for young workers and young-looking workers. The growers have not been educated on the proof of age documentation.

Source: Worker/grower interview, record review

**Plan Of Action:** Syngenta has trained its program implementation team on the importance of maintaining proof of age documents. The below action points will be the Standard Operating Procedure for Syngenta Sunflower Production and will be followed stringently every year.

- The company has started creating awareness among the growers and workers about the COC, including the importance of maintaining proof of age documentations for age verification. All the growers and workers have documents like election cards, Adhar cards etc.
- Syngenta will educate the growers to maintain all the relevant records at the farm, including age verification documents.
- During the internal monitoring process, Syngenta will check the proof of age documentation for all workers with the growers.

**Deadline Date:** November 2014 to March 2015

**Action Taken:**

**Plan Complete:**

**Plan Complete Date:**



## Child Labor: Employment of Young Workers

CL.6: Growers shall comply with all relevant laws and regulations that apply to young workers, i.e., those between the minimum working age and the age of 18, including those relating to hiring, working conditions, types of work, hours of work, proof of age documentation, and overtime.

### Noncompliance

**Explanation:** One young worker was found performing cross-pollination in one of the farms. He was working from 8:00 to 17:00 with a 1.5-hour break. As per local law, young workers should not work for more than six hours a day. Also, this young worker was paid INR 100 per day, which is below the minimum wage.

Source: Grower/worker interview, record review

**Plan Of Action:**

- Syngenta will educate the growers and workers about the working conditions for young workers, such as, hours of work, wages, written parental consent, working hours not affecting their education, etc.
- Syngenta will explore the possibility of re-enrolling the young workers into mainstream education.
- Syngenta will associate with the local school to propagate better working conditions for young workers in the community.
- A local level stakeholder's consultation will be organized to discuss this issue. The company will seek suggestions from the local stakeholders about the root causes, and a new action plan.

**Deadline Date:** November 2014 to March 2015

**Action Taken:**

**Plan Complete:**

**Plan Complete Date:**

## Harassment or Abuse: Discipline/ Verbal Abuse

H&A.8 Grower will not use, engage in, or support any form of verbal violence, including screaming, yelling, or the use of threatening, demeaning, or insulting language as means to maintain labor discipline.

### Noncompliance

**Explanation:** The company has not communicated its policy against harassment and abuse to the growers, and has not educated them on this policy. In one of the visited farms, the grower was verbally abusing the workers at the time of the IEM. He was standing at a height, supervising the workers and ordering the workers or pushing them to quicken the process. The workers were reluctant to talk to the monitors in front of the grower.

Source: Worker/grower interviews, observation

**Plan Of Action:**

- Syngenta will educate growers and workers about the harassment and abuse policy during the awareness campaigns in all villages before and during the season.
- Syngenta will educate the workers about the grievance procedure, and enable the workers to address incidences of harassment and abuse through the telephone number mentioned in wall paintings and other educational and communication materials.

**Deadline Date:** November 2014 to March 2015

**Action Taken:**

**Plan Complete:**

**Plan Complete Date:**

## Health and Safety: General Compliance Health and Safety

H&S.1 Growers shall comply with all local laws, regulations, and procedures concerning health and safety. In any case where local laws and the Workplace Code of Conduct are contradictory, the higher standards will apply. The grower will possess all legally required permits.

### Noncompliance

**Explanation:** The Insecticide Act stipulates that employers to provide training, PPE (Personal Protective Equipment), and health check-ups to workers who handle chemical pesticides. The company has not educated the growers or the workers about chemical pesticides, as per the law. It has not provided PPE to growers and workers involved in chemical application.

Source: Grower/worker interviews, record review

Reference: The Insecticide act 1968

**Plan Of Action:** Syngenta will create awareness among its implementation team, grower's, leaders, and key growers. The company will cover the growers and workers, in phased manner, under this awareness campaign.

- Syngenta will develop a health and safety manual to be followed at farms.
- During every pre-season campaign or grower/workers awareness campaign, the growers are educated on health and safety and encouraged about the use of PPE when handling chemicals.
- Syngenta will organize health & safety and first aid management training, in a phased manner, for growers, workers, etc.
- Syngenta will maintain the documentation of such campaigns at the IMS center.

Syngenta has planned to provide first aid kits and PPE for chemical spraying on a pilot basis and, depending on the feasibility, it will be extended to the entire area in a phased manner. 300 PPE will be distributed to growers, and 45 kits distributed in 45 villages.

**Deadline Date:** November 2014 to March 2015

**Action Taken:**

**Plan Complete:**

**Plan Complete Date:**

## Health and Safety: Health and Safety Management System

H&S.4 The health and safety policy shall contain the framework for a comprehensive health and safety management system within which growers' responsibilities and workers' rights and duties, various responsibilities of designated personnel, procedures that enable workers to raise health and safety concerns, and procedures for reporting death, injury, illness, and other health and safety issues (for instance, near-miss accidents) are clear and regularly tested and reviewed.

### Noncompliance

**Explanation:** The company's health and safety policy does not clearly specify comprehensive health and safety management systems that should be applied at the farm level.

Source: Management interviews, records review

**Plan Of Action:** Syngenta will provide a health and safety manual with policies and procedures to be followed at farms to growers, and educate them on using the manual.

Syngenta will educate the seed organizers about the form for reporting death, illness, and other health incidents/accidents. Additionally Syngenta will educate individuals at the grower/farm level on using this data to improve safety.

Syngenta will use different IEC materials to educate the target group.

**Deadline Date:** November 2014 to March 2015

**Action Taken:**

**Plan Complete:**

**Plan Complete Date:**

## Health and Safety: Communication to Workers

H&S.5 The health and safety policy shall be communicated to all workers in the local language or language(s) spoken by workers if different from the local language.

### Noncompliance

**Explanation:** The workers have not received any communication regarding the company's health and safety policy.

Source: Grower/worker interview, record review

**Plan Of Action:** Syngenta will ensure that workers are educated about health and safety policies every year/season. The company will create awareness about health and safety policy during first aid management and chemical management training organized in a phased manner, first covering 20% of the growers in a few villages. The company will cover at least the permanent workers employed in Syngenta contracted farms in a phased manner.

- Syngenta has developed communication materials on health and safety that will be distributed among the workers during the season.
- The company will increase the number of wall paintings to reach the majority of the worker communities.

Syngenta will maintain the documentation of these campaigns at the IMS center.

**Deadline Date:** November 2014 to March 2015

**Action Taken:**

**Plan Complete:**

**Plan Complete Date:**

## Health and Safety: Access to Safety Equipment and First Aid

H&S.6 Company should ensure that growers and workers have access to safety equipment and first aid.

### Noncompliance

**Explanation:** First aid boxes were distributed in a few villages, but their coverage is insufficient. The company does not have a mechanism to help the growers access first aid and safety equipment.

Source: Grower/management interview, record review

### Plan Of Action:

- First aid boxes are installed at key places in 45 production villages, which are easily accessible to the workers. The field supervisors monitor the usage and stock of medicines in these boxes.
- Syngenta will motivate the growers to maintain first aid kits at the farm level. Syngenta has planned to support these growers by providing small kits (cost effective) containing medicines of less quantity/smaller volume, sufficient for individual farms.
- Seed organizers are also instructed by the team to maintain first aid kits with their team members.

### Deadline Date:

November 2014 to March 2015

### Action Taken:

### Plan Complete:

### Plan Complete Date:

## Health and Safety: Personal Protective Equipment

H&S.7 All necessary personal protective equipment (PPE), such as gloves, eye protection, respiratory protection, etc., should be made available to relevant workers to prevent unsafe exposure (such as inhalation or contact with solvent vapors, dust, etc.) to health and safety hazards.

### Noncompliance

**Explanation:** The company has not distributed any PPE to growers/workers involved in handling of chemicals.

Source: Grower/worker/management interviews

**Plan Of Action:**

- Syngenta will organize safe chemical handling training for growers in a phased manner, to reach full coverage in three years.
- Syngenta will train workers' representatives employed in Syngenta contracted farms in a phased manner. Syngenta will motivate workers to use PPE, and demonstrate to workers the ill effects of not using PPE;
- Syngenta will work on finding appropriate PPE, suitable for the climatic conditions.
- The company has planned to provide PPE for chemical spraying on a pilot basis (300 growers) and, depending on the feasibility, this will be extended to the entire area in a phased manner.

**Deadline Date:** November 2014 to March 2015

**Action Taken:**

**Plan Complete:**

**Plan Complete Date:**

## Health and Safety: Chemical Management and Training

H&S.8 All chemicals and hazardous substances, farm produce, and raw materials should be properly labeled and stored. The grower shall not use any banned (either by national or international laws) pesticides fertilizers, or any other agro chemicals in the farm. The grower shall ensure safe disposal of waste chemicals or empty containers of chemicals or packing materials. The grower/organizer/company will provide the necessary training to the worker with regard to handling of agro chemicals (pesticides, fertilizers, and other hazardous substances), their application and the use of personal protective equipment.

### Noncompliance

**Explanation:** The workers have not received any training on health & safety and chemical handling from the company.

Source: Grower/worker/management interview, record review

**Plan Of Action:**

- Syngenta will organize safe chemical handling training for workers. The company will cover workers' representatives employed in Syngenta contracted farms in phased manner.
- Syngenta has developed communication materials on health and safety that will be distributed among the growers and workers during the season.
- The company will increase the number of wall paintings so that they reach the majority of the worker communities.

Syngenta will maintain the documentation of these campaigns at the IMS center.

Root cause: All the growers were not covered under village level awareness campaign, as sunflower production growers are new to this program. They are not yet fully aware about workplace standards of Syngenta-FLA

**Deadline Date:** November 2014 to March 2015

**Action Taken:**

**Plan Complete:**

**Plan Complete Date:**



### Health and Safety: Machinery Maintenance and Worker Training

H&S.11 All production machinery, equipment, and tools shall be regularly maintained and properly guarded. Workers shall receive training in the proper use and safe operation of machinery, equipment, and tools they use.

#### Noncompliance

**Explanation:** The workers have not received any training on the proper use and safe operation of machinery and equipment, such as water pumps operated by electricity; these pumps are not properly guarded and have open switch boxes.

[Source:](#) Grower/worker interviews

**Plan Of Action:** Syngenta plans to conduct exclusive health and safety training covering safe operation of machines and equipment for workers in a phased manner.

The company has planned distribute the various IEC materials to the workers.

**Deadline Date:** November 2014 to March 2015

**Action Taken:**

**Plan Complete:**

**Plan Complete Date:**

## Wages, Benefits and Overtime Compensation: Minimum Wage

WBOT.2 Growers shall pay workers, the legal minimum wage or the prevailing regional wage, whichever is higher.

### Noncompliance

**Explanation:** The legal minimum wage for different agricultural operations varies between INR 150 and INR 175, as per the central government notification. However, on the visited farms, only contract workers engaged in cross-pollination are paid INR 150 per day. All the other workers performing other tasks are paid INR 100- 130, which is below the minimum wage.

Reference: The Minimum wages act 1948

Source: [Grower/worker interviews](#)

**Plan Of Action:** Syngenta conducts internal monitoring of the seed production and systematically collects wage data. This data is then analyzed and revealed that the wage rate trend is increasing and, in most of the cases, the workers are paid more than the legal wages prescribed by the local government.

The company has started creating awareness among the implementation team and key growers. The company will cover the growers and workers under this campaign in a phased manner.

- Syngenta will educate the growers and workers about the legal wage rates in this area.
- Syngenta will also encourage the growers to pay the workers as per the local law, and monitor and record the wages paid by the growers to the workers.
- As this is a very sensitive issue, Syngenta will bring this issue to a stakeholders' forum to discuss, and decide the best strategy to remediate this in a sustainable manner.

**Deadline Date:** November 2014 to March 2015

**Action Taken:**

**Plan Complete:**

**Plan Complete Date:**

### **Wages, Benefits and Overtime Compensation: Worker Wage Awareness**

WBOT.6 Grower/Organizer/Company will make an effort to educate workers so that the terms of employment, wages, benefits and deductions shall be clearly understood and acceptable by the worker.

#### **Noncompliance**

**Explanation:** None of the workers interviewed were aware of their legally entitled wages and benefits, as per the local law.

Source: Worker interviews

**Plan Of Action:** The company had started creating awareness among the implementing team, key growers, and workers. The company will cover the growers and workers under this campaign, in a phased manner.

- Syngenta will educate the growers and workers about the legal wage rates in this area.
- Syngenta will also encourage the growers to pay the workers, as per the local law.
- As this is a very sensitive issue, Syngenta will consult with a stakeholders' forum to discuss and decide the strategy to remediate this noncompliance.

The company had started creating awareness among the workers and new growers.

**Deadline Date:** October 2014 to March 2015

**Action Taken:**

**Plan Complete:**

**Plan Complete Date:**

### **Wages, Benefits and Overtime Compensation: Record Maintenance**

WBOT.7 Company shall make efforts to educate and assist the growers in maintaining records of wages provided to the worker in cash or in-kind or both, and such records shall be acknowledge by the worker.

#### **Noncompliance**

**Explanation:** The growers do not maintain hours of work and wage records.

Source: Grower/Worker interviews, observation

**Plan Of Action:** 1. Syngenta has prepared a documentation kit that will be distributed to the growers. Growers will be educated about maintaining attendance records for the workers. These records will be maintained at the farm level.

2. The records will cover information about the code, attendance register, wage rates, working time, birth records, training records, etc.

**Deadline Date:** November 2014 to March 2015

**Action Taken:**

**Plan Complete:**

**Plan Complete Date:**